



CELEBRATING A
CENTURY
of CONSERVATION

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News & Views

Information For National Wildlife Refuge System Professionals in Region 3

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Region 3 Joins Nation to Celebrate a Century of Conservation

A bronze statue of Paul Kroegel, Pelican Island's first game warden, overlooks a spruced up Pelican Island NWR during Centennial festivities held March 14, 2003
--Photo by Eric Nelson



News, Notes and Jottings

New Adventures in Old Wilderness

More interest from WO recently in revisiting "old" Wilderness proposals on Refuge System lands. One such proposal was at Rice Lake NWR, first proposed in the early '70s. Updated information has been submitted – no word yet on whether further action will be taken on these proposals.

As Easy As ABC

"Story boarding" sessions for the Activity Based Costing Management pilot program were held last month in the RO. Field stations were represented by Kevin Brennan and Mary Stefanski. In addition, all other refuge programs (e.g. Realty, Private Lands, EVS, etc.) were represented. Look for more information and an all-employee "survey instrument" soon.

An Ash Whipping

"This has the potential to wipe out every ash tree in North America in the next century."

So says one USDA staffer in reference to the exotic Emerald Ash Borer, already established in Ohio and Michigan.

Indigenous to Asia, the EAB feeds on the inner bark of green, white and black ash and eventually girdles and kills the tree. There is no practical insecticide treatment for the pest – just lotsa firewood in the end. Contact Dan Sobieck for fact sheets and additional information on this exotic pest.

Hoppin' on the Centennial Bandwagon

If you rolled out of bed March 14, 2003, odds are you landed on a Centennial celebration somewhere in the region. Celebrations involving partners, volunteers and state and federal legislators were held at refuges across the region. Celebrations emptied the RO for day and night events. RD Bill Hartwig was at Pelican Island NWR, Acting RD Marvin Moriarty led activities in the RO, and later represented the Service at the evening event with the Minnesota Wild. NWRS Chief Nita Fuller attended events at Squaw Creek NWR in Missouri; Operations Chief Tom Worthington was at Muscatatuck NWR in Indiana. Newly minted Refuge Supervisor Barry Christenson was at Detroit River NWR in Michigan and Jon Kauffeld traveled to Illinois River NWR in Illinois. Jim Leach attended events at Minnesota Valley NWR and co-hosted partners, senate and congressional staffs at the Regional Office

event with the Minnesota Wild the evening of March 14.

Northwest Airlines has agreed to air the Don Henley Centennial PSA on all east-west flights during June. Northwest joins Atlanta-based Delta Airlines in airing NWRS PSAs.

Steve Kufin and the Donn Waage of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are finalizing the details on a limited production run of a special Hautman brothers Centennial print. The print features original artwork by Joe, Jim and Bob Hautman, with each depicting a refuge scene from either 1903, 1953 or 2003. Look for framed and unframed prints to be available for sale in early summer. All proceeds will be matched and used for restoration projects.

Marais des Cygnes News

An open house was held March 25, 2003 as part of the public review of the draft EA for the Marais des Cygnes NWR (Missouri) expansion. A 30 day comment period follows the open house. Condemnation continues to be a concern, although unwarranted. Most attendees supported the expansion.

Wisconsin Whooper Returns

This year's first whooping crane returned to Wisconsin in late March, completing a successful journey from wintering grounds at Florida's Chassahowitzka NWR. Known as "No. 6," the whooping crane left Florida in mid February. This marks the completion of a second round trip journey between Wisconsin and Florida.

Trees Making Way for Prairie Grass

Plans to restore native prairie grasslands at Union Slough NWR in northern Iowa are under some public scrutiny. Some oppose removing trees from this prairie setting. The refuge is now offering a 30-day comment period on a prairie management plan and conducts tours of refuge woodlots. Tours allow refuge biologists to explain why trees and prairie aren't always a good mix.

Pesky Buzzings

If you're bugged about mosquitoes, please check with the Regional Office before joining with local mosquito boards who want to blanket every wetland in sight with a cloud of pesticides. Refuge Supervisor Barry Christenson is negotiating this politically and environmentally sensitive issue now. The aim is to balance

human health concerns, such as risks of West Nile virus, with responsible ecosystem stewardship. Policy is evolving.

Burning Issues

It's still dry in many of the southern reaches of the region. Wildfires (or arson) continue to be a problem in the Iowa River corridor. Northwest Missouri continues to be very dry. Despite this, burn season is upon us. Over 900 acres of prescribed burns in Missouri so far.

Movers and Shakers

Rosalita Spiller, a volunteer who has contributed more than 8,000 hours to Crab Orchard NWR, was a guest of **Secretary Gale Norton** at a National Press Club luncheon April 16 in Washington. The Secretary is re-launching the "Take Pride in America" campaign. Rosalita is one of four Service volunteers chosen to attend. Crab Orchard Refuge Manager **Rick Frietsche** accompanied Rosalita.

Sheldon Myerchin will be reporting to St. Cloud in May as the new Minnesota Private Lands Coordinator. Sheldon, who replaces **Lance Kuester**, formerly served as the primary at Leopold WMD.

Scott Glup is the new Project Leader at Litchfield WMD. Scott is currently a ROS at Sand Lake NWR Complex, in South Dakota. Scott and his family will be reporting to Litchfield WMD in early June.

Rob Miller is the new Facilities Management Coordinator in Refuge Operations. Rob, a civil engineer, comes to the Service from private industry and takes over the duties previously performed by **Karen Nagengast**, who has assumed the Roads Coordinator (TEA 21) position. Rob reported for duty in late March. He will be conducting condition assessments on all of our field stations.

New Refuge Supervisor **Barry Christenson** has reported to duty and settled into his plush new office in the RO. Barry, formerly of Litchfield WMD, supervises refuges in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin.

Dan Sobieck, former R3 EA staffer and recent ARD-EA in Region 6 has returned in a new job as Chief, Info. Mgmt. and Program Planning Branch, Invasive Species Coordinator, ABC Coordinator, RONS Coordinator and Wilderness Coordinator for the refuges program. **Tim Yager** is now responsible for the Environmental Contaminants program.

Celebrating a Century of Conservation

Regional Refuge Events Involve, Comemorate, Inspire



—USFWS Photo

Visitors to Litchfield's Habitat Day celebrate the Centennial by constructing specially branded nesting boxes for wood ducks and blue birds.

Special Branded Wood Duck Boxes Mark Litchfield Habitat Day

More than 150 people joined in the Litchfield Wetland Management District's Centennial celebration during Habitat Day March 15, 2003. Visitors built wood duck and bluebird boxes to take home.

A local welder from Litchfield, Minn., crafted a special brand that included a blue goose image, "NWRS" and the dates "1903-2003." He also volunteered to brand each completed wood duck or bluebird box with this special emblem

honoring the Refuge Centennial.

The nest box building project was funded through a cost-share grant and the cooperation of several partners including two local lumber companies, Ducks Unlimited, Willmar Sportsman's Club and Minnesota Waterfowl Association. In addition to building nest boxes, the public viewed displays, videos and learn about the Refuge system. A second-day of issue cancellation of the National Wildlife Refuge stamp was also available.

Ohio Congresswoman is Featured Speaker at Ottawa NWR

Ohio Representative Marcy Kaptur was the featured speaker during the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial open house at Ottawa NWR March 14. Rep. Kaptur and other congressional staffers spoke to visitors and members of the media about their support for the Service, the refuge system and, more specifically, for a new visitor education center planned

for Ottawa NWR.

Congress recently appropriated funds for a visitor center at Ottawa NWR and the new center was celebrated during this event by with an official ground breaking ceremony. The theme of the new center will incorporate the design of the duck hunting club house at the Little Cedar Point unit of the refuge.



Hamden Slough NWR Hosts Pelican Island Stamp Events

Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge joined the Audubon, Minn., post office and the Lake Park Audubon Elementary School to host a temporary philatelic station for the release of the new Pelican Island NWR stamp. The stations were hosted at both the Audubon Post Office, and later in the day at the Lake Park Audubon Elementary school.

Refuge personnel set up displays, provided refreshments and posters at the Post Office. Commemorative cachets (envelopes) were provided to visitors, school students and refuge neighbors.

Approximately 100 residents visited with refuge staff at the post office. A total of 352 students received a short presentation on the refuge system centennial and a discussion of the unique opportunity to participate as a stamp station. Each student received a hand-cancelled cachet.

During the day the Audubon Post Office sold 1,220 Pelican Island NWR stamps, and used the special post mark: 'Celebrating a Century of Conservation' and 'Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge Station' to cancel 930 envelopes.

"Wild Night at the Wild" Employees, Partners and VIPs Join 18,560 Fans to Celebrate Refuge System's 100th Birthday

Start with more than 18,000 people geared up for a special hometown event. Add lots of special birthday cake, blue goose beanie babies, spectacular wildlife videos, eager Service employees and dedicated volunteers and you have the elements of Region 3's exceptional 100th birthday bash for the National Wildlife Refuge System, March 14, 2003, at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minn.

The Regional Office partnered with the NHL's Minnesota Wild and others to celebrate a "Wildlife Night at the Wild" during the Wild's home game against the Nashville Predators. Eighty-five Service employees, special guests and conservation partners were among the sellout crowd of 18,560.

The "Wild" event was one of numerous Centennial events in the region that attracted thousands of visitors, student, partners, Members of Congress, and news media.

"The refuge system scored a 'hat trick' during this event," said Refuge Area Supervisor Jim Leach, borrowing a hockey term for three goals scored in a game by a single player. "We celebrated the 100th birthday of the refuge system, we promoted our refuges and wetland management districts to thousands of outdoors-oriented Minnesotans, and we were able to join with our partners and other VIPs in a fun, social setting to talk conservation."

The Service's conservation partners figured prominently in the event. More than 3,000 blue goose beanie babies — each tagged with a 4 x 6-inch card containing a Refuge Centennial message and a map showing locations of refuges in Minnesota — were distributed by Service employees and volunteers to youngsters 12 and under as they entered the arena. The wildly popular beanies were purchased by Pheasants Forever for the event. Media Source, the blue goose beanie vendor, picked up the tab for express air freight from Asia in order to have the promotional items on hand before March 14.

"Puddles," the blue goose mascot, waddled through the crowd, distributing outreach materials, blue goose beanies and providing hugs, "high-fives" and a few photo ops for adults and kids alike. More than 1,000 pieces of specially deco-



Photo by Scott Flaherty

Young fans of the Minnesota Wild are all smiles after receiving complimentary Blue Goose beanies and Refuge Centennial birthday cake March 14 at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minn. Approximately 3,000 blue geese were distributed.

rated Centennial birthday cake were served to visitors to the Refuge Centennial display. Cakes were provided at no charge via the Minnesota Bakers Association and Rainbow Foods, a local grocery chain. Refuge system video clips and Centennial PSAs were broadcast on the arena's giant video screen during the evening.

The team's demographic research shows their fan base is dominated by outdoor enthusiasts of all ages and income brackets. The Wild made 63 seats available (at cost) to Service employees, plus donated 10 VIP seats in the owners suite. Acting Regional Director Marvin Moriarty and Jim Leach joined with partners and legislative representatives in the Wild owner's suite before and during the game. The list of VIPs included Ron Nargang, state director; The Nature Conservancy; Roger Pederson, state director; Ducks Unlimited; Joe Duggan, vice president, Pheasants Forever; Tim Bremicker, chief, Wildlife Division, Minnesota Department Natural Resources; Jim Gelbmann, state director for Senator Mark Dayton; Patrick Connolly, regional representative for Senator Norm



Photo by Scott Flaherty

Lots of fans received Centennial hugs!

Coleman; Chris Swedzinski, staff representative of Representative Mark Kennedy; Steve Messick, staff representative for Representative John Kline.

Living History Character Adds Perspective to Whittlesey Creek NWR Time Capsule Event

Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge used living history to bring its Centennial celebration to life. Asaph Whittlesey (aka Frank Nebenburgh of Ashland, Wis.) educated and entertained more than 100 visitors to the refuge's Centennial celebration March 14.



Nebenburgh, a Northland College student and Service student employee, modeled the living history character after the real Asaph Whittlesey, one of the founders of Ashland, the small town in northwest Wisconsin that is home to Whittlesey Creek NWR. Whittlesey chopped down the first tree to build the first white settler's home in what is now Ashland. His spirit for adventure and fortune led to development in northern Wisconsin, which transformed the landscape from forest to farm 100 years ago.

Whittlesey's colorful legend, however, lies in his travels by snowshoe and train to Madison to represent northern Wisconsin in the state legislature in 1860. He was also the first white owner of land that is now in the Whittlesey Creek Refuge.

The refuge time capsule ceremony included Nebenburgh depicting part of Whittlesey's life in a 10-minute story. He then helped Ashland Mayor Fred Schnook fill the time capsule. Items were submitted by several local landowners, the local Audubon Society, Refuge Manager Pam Dryer, staff of Iron River National Fish Hatchery, staff of the Ashland Fishery Resources Office, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Lake Superior Binational Program, Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Ashland Daily Press. The



Daily Press is the local paper that ran a front-page article about Asaph Whittlesey on Mar. 12, and a very supportive editorial on March. 14. The entire paper from both dates were included in the capsule.

After the ceremony, partici-

Refuge Manager Pam Dryer and Frank Nebenburgh (Asaph Whittlesey) examine the cover of the Whittlesey Creek NWR time capsule during the refuge's Centennial program March 14. Nebenburgh, a student at Northland College in Ashland, Wis., created the living history character modeled after Asaph Whittlesey (original photo of Asaph inset above left). Ashland Mayor Fred Schnook and local landowners participated in the time capsule event.

pants hit the hiking trails with Asaph Whittlesey along the Visitor Center's nature trail. The Wisconsin Historical Society and Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center teamed with the Service on this luminary-lit trek. Hikers got to learn about navigating by stars, hear about wildlife sounds in the night and listen to stories about the Ojibwa Tribe and travelers of that era. Volunteers and staff from both the Ashland Fishery Resources Office and Iron River National Fish Hatchery helped make the evening a success.

Two Rivers NWR Celebrates Refuge Centennial With Two Days of Events

Two days of Centennial events marked the 100th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System March 14-15 at Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge in Brussels, Ill. A fog-filled March 14 couldn't dampen the spirits of the more than 130 students and teachers from area schools who participated in fun-filled outdoor education activities.

On March 15, about 120 visitors continued the celebration, starting with a raptor program presented by the World Bird Sanctuary. Those in the audience were fascinated to see birds of prey up close such as the peregrine falcon, great horned owl, turkey vulture and red-tailed hawk. Not to be outdone by birds held in captivity, a nearby flock of snow geese could be heard singing their melodic praises, while a variety of ducks and water birds were swimming and flying in the background of the outdoor amphitheater.

Local dignitaries joined in placing contents in the time capsule, while Larry Reid, a local radio personality and outdoor enthusiast, shared his personal insights on growing up in Calhoun County. He emphasized the positive impact of the refuge, and how it helps wildlife in the area.

Partners figured prominently in the success of the events. Refuge staff worked closely with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Center for American Archeology, the Illinois Natural History Survey and the World Bird Sanctuary.



Centennial Birthday Present Army Donates 168 Wetland Acres to Detroit River IWR

The Army Corps of Engineers delivered a huge Centennial birthday present during Centennial celebrations March 14 at Detroit River NWR.

The Corps used the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System, to announce its donation of 168 acres of wetlands to the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

The announcement came during a planning meeting hosted by Michigan Congressman John Dingell and his staff. Rep. Dingell and his staff have been huge supporters of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and are taking an active role in Centennial celebrations. More than 80 participants at the meeting set about planning a Detroit area Centennial celebration for later in the summer.

Barry Christenson, Service refuge field supervisor for Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin, accepted the donation from Corps District Engineer Lt. Col. Thomas Magness. The donated site hosts

an active bald eagle nest and provides feeding, nesting and resting area for waterfowl, shorebirds and waterbirds. Hunting is a popular activity on the site.

In addition to the announcement from the Corps, sub-committee chairpersons were appointed to plan a Centennial event for late summer in Detroit. Major industry partners such as Ford Motor Co., DaimlerChrysler Corp., Lazy Boy Industries, Detroit Edison Energy and others volunteered to participate in the planning of the event. Most of the down river communities, including Wayne and Monroe counties, have also volunteered to assist.



Congressman John Dingell, left, joins Puddles, Lt. Col. Tom Magness and Refuge Supervisor Barry Christenson for a Centennial celebration at Detroit River NWR.



Visitor Services Chief Donna Stanek (aka "Vanna White") poses a refuge trivia question to Claudia Wondra, division of realty, during Centennial festivities at the Regional Office March 14.

Rydell NWR Celebration Takes on Historic Theme

Rydell National Wildlife Refuge celebrated the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System March 16, with multiple family oriented events. Refuge Manager John Braastad joined members of the Grand Forks, Minn., Boone and Crockett Club and others to start the day with an old-time fur trader /black powder recreational program that introduced visitors to the tools, weapons and daily lifestyle of pre-settlement mountain men and their effect on the local landscape.

Later, Juan Carlos Giese, refuge operations specialist, gave the audience a synopsis of refuge system history and the policies and practices that are, and will continue to, shape the way the system is managed for wildlife, their habitats, and the people who come to appreciate their national wildlife refuges.

Wayne Goeken, Friends group member, then gave those attending an informational presentation of the Friends of Rydell Refuge Association. The Centennial time capsule and its contents were also displayed for the crowd. Pictures, publications and a variety of other information on area history and refuge management were set aside to be placed in the capsule.



Photo by Scott Flaherty

Theresa Kassa and Rita Boettcher of Best Brands Corp. deliver extra special Centennial birthday cakes to the Regional Office March 14. They also delivered 10 decorated cakes to the Xcel Energy Arena that evening for the Wild event.

Minnesota Bakers Association, Rainbow Foods Donate BirthdayCakes

Few of us would ever consider hosting a birthday party without a birthday cake, right? And, when you consider a party commemorating an organization's 100th birthday, you definitely want to make the event special.

The Region's Centennial effort added another partner when Minnesota-based Best Brands, Inc., came forward to donate special Centennial birthday cakes for special celebrations scheduled for March 14.

Best Brands' and its partners provided 12 specially decorated sheet cakes for the Region's 'Wild Night at the Wild' event March 14 at Excel Energy Center. Another two cakes were provided to Centennial celebrations at the Regional Office and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Best Brands, Inc., a MBA member, volunteered to provide the birthday cakes as a community service project. The Eagan, Minn., baker supplies cakes and other baked goods to retailers throughout the Twin Cities. Rainbow Foods, a regional grocery chain and Best

Brands partner, provided decorative touches. Icing for the cakes was provided by Rich's, another Best Brands partner.

In the News

Oktoberfest Celebration Nets Donation to Muscatatuck NWR Learning Center

Oktoberfest, Inc. of Seymour, Indiana, donated \$500 to - Muscatatuck Wildlife Society Foundation — \$500 — The money will be used for a permanent display area at the new Conservation Learning Center at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge.

Muscatatuck NWR attracts thousands of visitors not only from the Seymour area but also from all over Indiana and surrounding states. Many of these visitors are schoolchildren brought by teachers and parents to learn more about natural resources in southern Indiana.

Oktoberfest, Inc. hosts an annual Oktoberfest in Seymour, Ind. Profits are distributed to local non-profits. "Tribtown.com, Jackson County, Indiana."



Darryl Walker of Squaw Creek NWR places a Centennial banner in downtown Mound City, Mo. The northwest Missouri town partnered with the refuge to celebrate the Centennial March 14.



The Refuge System: A Personal Association

Charlie Wooley

Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services

The brightness of the jade green island jutting out of the fog-choked Gulf of Alaska was breathtakingly beautiful. In the distance was Buldir Island, in the Aleutian Islands, approximately 1,500 miles west of Anchorage. It was June 1977, and I was viewing the small island from the deck of a Soviet fishing trawler while monitoring the trawler's commercial fishing catch in the western Aleutians. Buldir Island is part of the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge and is home to millions of nesting seabirds. It has played an important role in the recovery of the Aleutian Canada Goose, and its underwater substrate provides tremendous foraging opportunities for numerous marine fish species.

I recently thought of Buldir Island as I stood on a wildlife viewing observation platform at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, located in suburban Minneapolis, and watched a fully loaded Northwest Airlines 747 strain to gain altitude as it took off from the adjacent Minneapolis International Airport. The quiet of the afternoon was interrupted by the plane; I knew from the time of day and model of aircraft that it was heading for Tokyo, Japan. My mind wandered as I thought of all the fascinating places on earth this plane would fly over before it reached Tokyo, some 6,000 miles later. I was sure that it would fly over the Aleutians, probably at an altitude that would make it seem almost invisible as it flew over Buldir; compared to the noisy, earthshaking-induced, takeoff that I had just witnessed. What a stark contrast—Buldir; noisy seabirds, the howl of the “birthplace of the winds,” and other unique sounds produced by nature, versus Minnesota Valley and the background noise of humanity. As I watched the jet disappear into the clouds, I thought, “that is what's great about the Refuge System; it's the diverse and intricate pieces of land and water; like Buldir Island in the Aleutians and ‘the Valley’ in Minnesota, that are so different, so unique, one vibrating with the noise of seabirds and the other with the hum of people, but when linked together form the greatest conservation network in the world—the National Wildlife Refuge System.”

Having worked for 24 years as a biologist for the Fish and Wildlife Service, both in Fisheries and Ecological Services, I've had many professional experiences while working with numerous partners to protect and restore fish and wildlife within the Refuge System—salmon research on the Kenai, Kirkland's warbler recovery activities with Seney, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement in the Upper Mississippi, Gulf sturgeon life history investigations in the shadow of St. Vincent, striped bass restoration in the Nanticoke River at Blackwater, and common tern nest surveys on the Michigan Islands NWR. These experiences have been a constant reminder to me of the importance of the Refuge System for the long-term protection of fish and wildlife. These conservation actions demonstrate the unique ability of the Refuge System to provide and maintain habitats for a wide assemblage of species. They also allow the Service to provide leadership, and to hone new scientific and management techniques, in very important conservation activities. These efforts provide important examples of modern resource conservation, demonstrating to the world that the Service will not back away from exploring and implementing new and cutting edge resource protection programs.

There is also the aspect of people and outdoor recreation that I have been privileged to enjoy within the Refuge System. One of my fondest memories is when I introduced the Refuge System to my oldest daughter as she developed a sixth grade science fair project titled, “Comparison of bird numbers and diversity at the Minnesota Valley and Egmont Key NWRs in January.” Can you guess the outcome? I've had the privilege of hunting and fishing with my father; brothers, and close friends over the years at the following Refuges: Kenai; Kodiak; Blackwater; Delta; Ding Darling; Prime Hook and Bombay Hook. I've seen the welcome mat out for the public to bird-watch and hike at Loxahatchee; Chincoteague; St. Marks and Horicon. With a great sense of pride, I've watched on television as Service biologists welcomed whooping cranes arrive at Chassahowitzka. I've observed from the background as a Refuge biologist explained the fine points of a pool drawdown to a visitor at Mark Twain and then volunteered to show the visitor around later in the fall, when the pool would be completely covered with migrating waterfowl. I've witnessed staff at Rice Lake go to great efforts to explain the mysteries of ringneck duck migrations to a group of visitors. The Refuge System offers a front row seat for the American public to some of the finest outdoor recreation opportunities in the world, but with the best interests of fish and wildlife coming first. Refuge employees are protectors and resource stewards who take tremendous pride in managing and providing for public use, in an appropriate manner; these magnificent resources.

Sure, I have seen efforts that have not developed completely in the way folks who have a passion for resource protection may have envisioned. The nearest example to my heart was the proposed Big Darby Creek Refuge in central Ohio, which would have encompassed waters where, as a child, I learned to fish and collect and identify aquatic bugs with my Dad, thus sparking my interest in biology. The refuge concept was not accepted by the public, and eventually the Service withdrew the proposal. However, the attention has spurred private and local conservation efforts at watershed protection; as a result, the resource will hopefully be protected. Thus, even when Refuges had a setback, we still gained resource protection because of those valiant efforts.

For every land protection setback though, there are usually a multitude of victories. I am proud to have been associated with the addition of Big and Little Charities Islands to the Shiawassee NWR in Michigan. Through Natural Resource Damage Assessment activities conducted by Ecological Services, we were able to negotiate with a large company to have them purchase the islands and then have them deeded to the Service to make amends for pollution discharged into Saginaw Bay. It was truly a sense of great pride and accomplishment for me to have been associated with protecting unique habitat types and adding land to the premiere land and water conservation organization in the world, the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Got a point of view about the Refuge System? Send your one page commentary/essay to Scott Flaherty in External Affairs for publication in future News and Views.

Live From Winona, It's the Upper Miss!

About 80 area residents, families and students took their coffee cups and concerns about their favorite wildlife refuge to a packed café in historic downtown Winona, Minn., to participate in a special River Refuge Edition of Minnesota Public Radio's "Mid Morning" program broadcast live from the southeast Minnesota river town April 25. The myriad of issues and opportunities found on Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge – Minnesota's oldest refuge – were topics of the two-hour program which was broadcast statewide.

Refuge Manager Don Hultman and birding expert Carol Schumacker joined program host Katherine Lanpher to discuss everything from refuge management issues and the NWRs Centennial, to birding and outdoor recreation opportunities. Audience members, including several middle school students, joined listeners from across Minnesota pose questions to Hultman, who, with his knowledge and personality, not only informed but entertained.

Issues discussed included wetland management, endangered species on the refuge, threats posed by pollution and contaminants, changing migration patterns of birds and waterfowl, the refuge's relationship with the Corps of Engineers and success of environmental management programs, and of course, changing patterns and demands posed by increased public use of the refuge.

Hultman also spoke about the refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), and the high level of public interest and participation in helping the refuge chart its course for the future. Through scoping meetings and workshops, Hultman feels the public has a greater understanding of the issues and challenges facing the refuge.

"We're concerned about the increases in boating and recreation use of the refuge and how that fits with our mission," Hultman said. "We're hearing from companies that want to promote eco-tourism on the refuge. I don't have a problem with that, but we want it to be a quality experience for visitors without adverse affects to wildlife or the refuge," he told the audience.

A listener from Pepin, Wis., asked Hultman about the refuge's most recent success stories. Hultman said the large increase in numbers of bald eagles nesting on the refuge, as well as management drawdowns of the river pools rank at the



Photo by Cindy Samples

Radio host Katherine Lanpher poses questions to Don Hultman.

top of the list. "Just this morning I saw 200 pelicans at Trempealeau NWR, last year 31,000 tundra swans took refuge on the Upper Miss., Canvasback ducks come here in incredibly large numbers every year," Hultman explained. "I tell my staff that this place is a 'refuge of miracles!'"

In the second hour, Carol Schumacker

took questions on birding opportunities on the refuge. Schumacker fielded questions about crows, hawks, bluebirds and eagles. She also provided tips on purchasing good binoculars, starting bird lists and what to look for on the refuge, especially the prothonotary warblers!

Chief's Corner

It has been an exciting time here in the Regional Office and at our field stations. The reason of course is our much-anticipated Refuge System Centennial. While much of the national focus has been on the March 14th Pelican Island event, many Region 3 stations have held their own celebrations, such as the Squaw Creek NWR Centennial event I attended in April.

In an ideal world, the occasion of our Centennial might be marked with a tremendous swelling of public support and an influx of resources to further our mission. World events preclude this, however, and demand the nation's attention and resources be directed in support of our troops and mission in the Middle East.

Conflict is nothing new, as a world leader our nation has endured wars and crippling disasters, both natural and man-made. So too has the Refuge System

endured — through conflict, through good years and bad. And while times may be "lean" right now, they can't be called bad. A century ago we started with one man and one boat — today thousands of dedicated professionals advance the Refuge System mission in every state in the nation and in many foreign countries. We're managing for wildlife, restoring habitat, building partnerships, beating back invasives, and leading by example — every day. It's a good fight. It honors those who came before us and sets the stage for those who will follow.

With dozens of Centennial events scheduled across the region this summer and fall, I'm telling everyone to get out and enjoy the fruits of our labor. We should all be proud of what we have accomplished, and proud to be stewards of the greatest network of wildlife lands in the world.

Happy Centennial!